United Nations ST/AI/2015/2

Secretariat

12 March 2015

Administrative instruction

Home leave

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2009/4, and for the purpose of implementing staff regulation 5.3 and staff rule 5.2, hereby promulgates the following:

Section 1
Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purpose of the present instruction:

(a) *Eligible family members*: a spouse and those children recognized as dependants under staff rule 3.6 (a) (iii);

(b) *Excess baggage*: accompanied baggage not carried free of charge by transportation companies as administered under administrative instruction ST/AI/2015/1, or as amended;

(c) *Home country*: the country of the staff member's nationality as recognized by the United Nations;

(d) *Non-family duty station*: a duty station designated as "non-family" by the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), following the decision of the Department of Safety and Security of the Secretariat, where, for reasons of safety and security, all eligible dependants are restricted from being present;

(e) *Place of home leave*: the place within the staff member's home country, for the purpose of travel and transportation entitlements, with which the staff member had the closest residential ties during the period of his or her most recent residence in the home country;

(f) *Terminal expenses*: a fixed amount to cover all expenditures for transportation and incidental charges between the airport or other point of arrival or departure and the hotel or other place of dwelling, as provided in information circular ST/IC/2001/43, entitled "Official travel", or as amended;

(g) *Travel time*: fixed amount of time not chargeable to annual leave for home leave travel undertaken during a working day, as administered under administrative instruction ST/AI/2013/3, or as amended;

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(h) *Unaccompanied shipment*: personal effects or household goods shipped separately from the staff member's travel.

Section 2
General provisions

Purpose

2.1 The purpose of home leave is to enable eligible staff members serving outside their home country to visit their home country at United Nations expense for the purpose of spending in that country a reasonable period of annual leave to allow them and their families to renew their ties with and interests in their home country.

Eligibility

2.2 Subject to the provisions of section 3.1 below, staff members shall be eligible for home leave travel if they are:

(a) Internationally recruited and residing and serving outside their home country; or

(b) Locally recruited and on assignment to a field mission.

2.3 A staff member who is a permanent resident of a country other than that of his or her nationality and who serves at a duty station in his or her country of permanent residence shall not be eligible for home leave travel.

Frequency of home leave cycle

2.4 The home leave cycle is determined in accordance with the hardship classification of duty stations as established by ICSC, as follows:

(a) Staff members assigned to duty stations that are classified as H, A or B are entitled to home leave travel once in every 24 months;

(b) Staff members assigned to duty stations that are classified as C, D or E are entitled to home leave travel once in every 12 months.

Elements

2.5 The home leave entitlement consists of:

(a) Round trip air ticket(s) for the staff member and his or her eligible family members between the duty station and the recognized place of home leave of the staff member;

(b) Terminal expenses for the staff member and his or her eligible family members;

(c) Travel time;

(d) Excess baggage for the staff member and his or her eligible family members;

(e) Unaccompanied shipment of personal effects;

(f) An additional unaccompanied shipment for staff members serving at duty stations with a 12-month home leave cycle.[1]

2.6 In lieu of all of the entitlements provided in section 2.5 above, staff members may opt to utilize their home leave travel entitlements through the lump-sum option provided for in section 12 of administrative instruction ST/AI/2013/3, entitled "Official travel".

Section 3
Conditions for exercising the home leave entitlement

3.1 Eligible staff members may exercise their home leave entitlement provided all of the following conditions are met:

(a) The staff member continues to reside in a country other than that of which he or she is a national, or, in the case of a staff member who is a native of a non-metropolitan territory of the country of the duty station and who maintained his or her normal residence in such non-metropolitan territory prior to appointment, he or she continues to reside, while performing his or her official duties, outside such territory;

(b) The staff member's service in the United Nations Secretariat, or in another United Nations common system organization, is expected to continue for at least 6 months beyond the date of his or her return from home leave if he or she is serving in a duty station with a 24-month home leave cycle, or for at least 3 months beyond the date of his or her return from home leave if he or she is serving in a duty station with a 12-month home leave cycle;

(c) In the case of the first home leave, the staff member's service is expected to continue for at least 6 months beyond the completion of 24 months of qualifying service if he or she is serving in a duty station with a 24-month home leave cycle, or for at least 3 months beyond the completion of 12 months of qualifying service if he or she is serving in a duty station with a 12-month home leave cycle;

(d) The staff member has accrued the required service credits towards home leave as at the date of departure on home leave travel in accordance with the provisions of the present instruction; and

(e) The staff member has met the intervals between home leave travel and other types of travel in sections 3.13 to 3.15.

Accrual of service credits towards home leave

3.2 The home leave entitlement shall be administered in accordance with a points system whereby service credit points accumulated towards home leave are used to determine when a staff member's home leave falls due. Home leave service credit points shall accrue on the basis of full calendar months of qualifying service.

3.3 Staff members who are eligible for home leave as of their date of appointment shall accrue service credit points towards home leave from that date. Staff members who become eligible for home leave subsequent to their appointment shall start to

[1] The designation of duty stations and the associated home leave entitlements are set out in information circular ST/IC/2015/3, entitled "Classification of duty stations and special entitlements for staff members serving at designated duty stations", or as amended.

accrue service credit points towards home leave from the effective date on which they became eligible.

3.4 Staff members shall accrue service credit points towards home leave as follows:

(a) A staff member assigned to a duty station with a 24-month cycle shall earn one point for each full month of service at that duty station (i.e. 24 points in a 2-year period of service);

(b) A staff member assigned to a duty station with a 12-month cycle shall earn two points for each full month of service at that duty station (i.e. 24 points in a 1-year period of service);

(c) Fractions of a month of service shall be treated as follows:

(i) From 1 to 15 days of service: no credit;

(ii) More than 15 days of service: full credit.

3.5 Part-time staff members eligible for home leave shall accrue service credit points towards home leave with the same periodicity as full-time staff in accordance with ST/AI/291/Rev.1, entitled "Part-time employment", or as amended. The entitlement will be paid at the appropriate part-time rate.

3.6 Staff members shall not accrue service credit points towards home leave during periods of special leave with partial pay or without pay exceeding one month.[2]

3.7 When a staff member moves from a duty station with a normal 24-month home leave cycle to a duty station with an accelerated 12-month home leave cycle, or when the home leave cycle of a duty station changes from 24 months to 12 months, service credit points shall accrue at the rate of two points per month of service as from the effective date of transfer or assignment to the new duty station or as from the effective date of change of the home leave cycle at the duty station. Similarly, in the reverse situation when a staff member moves from a duty station with a 12-month home leave cycle to a duty station with a 24-month home leave cycle, or when the home leave cycle of a duty station changes from 12 months to 24 months, service credit points shall accrue at the rate of one point per month of service as from the effective date of transfer or assignment to the new duty station or the effective date of change of the home leave cycle of the duty station. If the effective date of transfer, assignment or change of home leave cycle of the duty station falls in between the first and the last day of the month, the full credit for the month of service shall be based on the duty station in which the staff member served for more than 15 days, as follows:

(a) More than 15 days of service at the duty station with a normal 24-month home leave cycle: one point for such month;

(b) More than 15 days of service at the duty station with an accelerated 12-month home leave cycle: two points for such month.

[2] "One month" shall be counted from the first day to the last day of a calendar month (e.g. 1-31 May) or as the period extending from a date in one calendar month to the date preceding the corresponding date in the following month (e.g. 15 May-14 June), as appropriate.

Utilization of service credit points towards home leave travel

3.8 A staff member may exercise his or her home leave entitlement once he or she has accrued 24 service credit points. Upon departure on home leave travel, 24 points will be deducted from the staff member's balance of points, and the accrual of points shall continue in accordance with the provisions of sections 3.2 to 3.7.

Advance and delayed home leave

3.9 A staff member may request to exercise home leave in advance of accruing the 24 service credit points required for the home leave entitlement. A staff member may be granted advance home leave, provided that normally no less than 12 points have been accrued, and subject to the provisions of sections 3.13 to 3.18. A negative points balance shall be recorded in such cases up to a maximum of minus 12 points. To become eligible for the next home leave, a staff member must make up the negative points balance and then reach an accrual of 24 points, as the granting of advance home leave does not advance the date of entitlement to the subsequent home leave.

3.10 The granting of advance home leave shall be subject to the conditions for the entitlement being subsequently met. If those conditions are not met, the staff member will be required to reimburse the costs paid by the Organization for the advance home leave travel, including any associated costs.

3.11 Subject to the provisions of sections 3.12 to 3.18, a staff member may delay the exercise of the home leave entitlement.

Maximum service credit points

3.12 While a staff member may delay exercising his or her home leave entitlement, no more than 48 service credit points may be accrued towards the entitlement. Once a staff member has accrued the maximum 48 points, he or she shall not accrue any more points until he or she exercises his or her home leave entitlement. Accrual of points shall start again on the first day of the month in which the staff member departs on home leave travel. Any unused points balance shall be carried forward and utilized for the next home leave, subject to sections 3.17 and 3.18.

Intervals between home leave travel and other types of travel

3.13 For staff members assigned to duty stations with a 24-month home leave cycle, there shall normally be an interval of no less than 12 months of qualifying service between the date of return from one home leave travel and the departure date of the next home leave travel. In addition, there shall be an interval of no less than nine months between home leave travel and family visit travel, to be counted from the return date of one travel to the departure date of the other travel. Staff members serving in duty stations with a 24-month home leave cycle shall not be authorized to travel on home leave and family visit during the same calendar year.

3.14 For staff members assigned to duty stations with an accelerated 12-month home leave cycle, there shall normally be an interval of no less than six months of qualifying service between the date of return from one home leave travel and the departure date of the next home leave travel. In addition, there shall normally be an interval of no less than three months between home leave travel and family visit travel, to be counted from the return date of one travel to the departure date of the other travel.

3.15 For staff members serving in duty stations with a 24- or 12-month home leave cycle, there shall normally be an interval of no less than three months of qualifying service between travel by the staff member in lieu of education grant travel by the child and home leave travel, counted from the date of return from one travel to the departure date of the other travel.

Loss of entitlement to return travel expenses

3.16 Irrespective of the balance of accrued home leave service credit points, a staff member who resigns before completing six months of service following the date of his or her return from travel on home leave, or within three months for a staff member assigned to a duty station with a 12-month home leave cycle, shall not be entitled to payment of return travel expenses, or to reimbursement of unaccompanied shipment or removal expenses, for himself or herself and eligible family members, unless the Secretary-General determines that there are compelling reasons for authorizing such payment.

Loss of entitlement to home leave travel

3.17 A staff member shall lose his or her entitlement to home leave travel under any of the following circumstances:

(a) The staff member changes his or her recognized nationality to that of the country of his or her duty station; or

(b) The staff member is assigned or transferred to serve in his or her recognized country of home leave or country of permanent residence; or

(c) The staff member acquires the status of permanent resident in the country of the duty station; or

(d) In the case of locally recruited staff members on mission assignment, upon return to the duty station at which they were recruited.

3.18 In the circumstances described in section 3.17 (a) to (d), the staff member's balance of service credit points shall be forfeited.

Section 4
Travel of eligible family members

4.1 The United Nations shall pay the travel expenses of eligible family members on home leave, subject to the staff member fulfilling the eligibility requirements to undertake home leave travel in accordance with staff rule 5.2 and the provisions of the present instruction.

4.2 Eligible family members may undertake home leave travel, together or separately, at a different time than the staff member if for family or work-related reasons they are unable to travel together. In the case of separate home leave travel, point deductions to the staff member's balance of service credit points shall apply from the date of departure on home leave travel of the staff member. In the event that a staff member becomes ineligible for home leave following the separate home leave travel of his or her eligible family members, the staff member shall reimburse the Organization for the cost of the home leave travel of the family members.

4.3 A staff member eligible for home leave travel in respect of his or her eligible family members may request that home leave travel be exercised between a dependent child's place of study away from the duty station and the place of home leave. In such cases, the amount of travel expenses payable by the Organization shall not exceed the cost of travel between the staff member's duty station and his or her recognized place of home leave. If the cost of travel from the place of study is more economical than that from the staff member's duty station, the amount payable by the Organization shall be limited to the actual travel expenses incurred, provided these do not exceed the approved standard of accommodation.[3]

4.4 For eligible dependent children, there shall normally be an interval of no less than three months between travel on home leave and education grant travel, except as provided for under section 8.1 of administrative instruction ST/AI/2011/4, entitled "Education grant and special education grant for children with a disability".

Special conditions applicable when both spouses are staff members of organizations of the United Nations common system

4.5 If both spouses are staff members of the United Nations common system who are eligible for home leave, each staff member may choose to exercise his or her own home leave entitlement or to accompany his or her spouse.

4.6 If each staff member chooses to exercise his or her own home leave entitlement separately, eligible dependent children may accompany either parent but not both.

4.7 Whichever option is chosen, the frequency of travel shall not exceed the established periodicity of home leave travel for both staff members and their dependent children.

4.8 When both spouses are staff members of the United Nations common system and only one of them is entitled to home leave travel, the other staff member is considered an eligible family member and may accompany his or her spouse on home leave travel in accordance with the provisions of sections 4.1 to 4.4 above. In such cases, no travel time shall be granted to the accompanying spouse.

Travel of a newborn or adopted child

4.9 A dependent child born or adopted outside the duty station may be authorized ex post facto to travel to the duty station of the staff member in conjunction with the return leg of the staff member's home leave travel. When such travel is authorized, the staff member may be entitled to the reimbursement of a one-way air ticket for his or her new dependent child from the recognized place of home leave to the duty station, as well as terminal expenses, excess baggage and unaccompanied shipment entitlement.

4.10 When a dependent child born or adopted outside the duty station is authorized to travel to the duty station under section 4.9 above, the staff member shall not be entitled to the payment of assignment grant with respect to the new dependent child, unless the home leave travel was combined with travel on assignment or transfer to another duty station in accordance with section 9.2 below.

[3] Section 4 of administrative instruction ST/AI/2013/3, entitled "Official travel", or as amended, provides the standard of accommodation for air travel.

Service in non-family duty stations

4.11 A staff member appointed, transferred or assigned to a non-family duty station shall not be entitled to home leave travel in respect of his or her eligible family members. However, when a staff member eligible for home leave travel is assigned from a family duty station to a non-family duty station, the eligible family members may travel from the family duty station to the place of home leave on a one-way advance home leave travel. Should the eligible family members wish to travel to a location other than the place of home leave, the cost of travel shall be limited to that between the family duty station and the place of home leave. When eligible family members travel on one-way advance home leave, the deduction of service credit points shall be made at the time of departure of the staff member on his or her home leave travel when it falls due.

4.12 Where a staff member's eligible family members travelled on one-way advance home leave following the staff member's assignment to a non-family duty station, those eligible family members may travel on the return leg of the home leave travel if the staff member returns to his or her previous family duty station following the completion of his or her assignment. In the case where a staff member is transferred or reassigned from the non-family duty station to a family duty station that is not his or her previous duty station, the eligible family members may travel to join the staff member on change of official duty station.

Section 5
Length of stay in the country of home leave

5.1 A staff member and his or her eligible family members travelling on home leave shall be required to spend no less than seven calendar days, exclusive of travel time, in his or her home country. The minimum stay of seven calendar days consists of seven days and six nights, consecutive or otherwise, to be counted from midnight on the night of arrival to midnight on the sixth night, during which the staff member and his or her eligible family members are physically present in the authorized country of home leave. Time spent travelling prior to arrival in, or after departure from, the country of home leave shall not be counted towards the minimum seven-day stay in the home country.

5.2 The requirement to spend no less than seven calendar days, exclusive of travel time, in the home country is applicable to both the staff member and the eligible family members, whether they travel together or separately. However, in the latter case, the staff member and his or her eligible family members are not required to spend the seven days together at the same time in the home country.

5.3 Upon return from home leave travel, a staff member is required to provide evidence that he or she has complied with the required minimum length of stay in his or her home country. Such evidence may include, but is not limited to, used airline tickets and boarding passes, United Nations laissez-passer or national passport containing the dates of arrival and departure from the country to which a particular home leave travel was authorized.

5.4 Except for the number of days charged to travel time as defined under section 1 (g) and provided for in section 2.5 (c) above, the number of days absent from duty while on home leave shall be charged to the staff member's annual leave balance, unless the staff member's absence is otherwise charged to sick leave or

maternity leave, paternity leave, special leave with full pay in the case of adoption of a child or special leave without pay approved under section 5.5 below. In the case of sick leave, staff members shall be required to submit the necessary certification as required in administrative instruction ST/AI/2005/3, entitled "Sick leave", or as amended.

5.5 Subject to the approval of the respective supervisors and executive offices or local human resources or administrative offices, a staff member holding a fixed-term or continuing appointment[4] who is a mother or father of a newly born or adopted child may utilize, as appropriate, authorized maternity leave, paternity leave, special leave with full pay in case of adoption of a child or special leave without pay for a maximum period of two years for childcare purposes while on home leave travel. Where special leave without pay is authorized under the present section, no official travel shall be undertaken while on special leave without pay. Such staff members must be in full pay status when home leave travel is undertaken to and from the home

Section 6
Change of country of home leave

6.1 The country of home leave shall be the country of the staff member's recognized nationality for United Nations purposes. However, in exceptional and compelling circumstances, the Secretary-General may authorize a country other than the country of nationality as the country of home leave as detailed in section 6.2 below.

6.2 For a change of the country of home leave to be authorized, all of the conditions set out in staff rule 5.2 (d) (iii) a must be met as follows:

(a) The staff member maintained normal residence in such other country for a prolonged period, that is, a minimum of five years consecutively, immediately preceding his or her appointment with the Organization;

(b) The staff member continues to have close family and personal ties in that country;

(c) Taking home leave in that country would not be inconsistent with the purposes and intent of the home leave.

6.3 A change of country of home leave may be granted only once in a staff member's entire service with the Organization, including service in another United Nations common system organization. Once a change of country of home leave has been authorized, it is deemed as a permanent change, and no change shall be made to revert to the original country of home leave on the basis of the staff member's recognized nationality.

6.4 When such a permanent change of country of home leave has been authorized, the Organization shall bear the home leave travel and transportation costs to the newly designated country of home leave.

[4] Pursuant to staff rule 13.1, all permanent appointments shall be governed by the terms and conditions applicable to continuing appointments under the Staff Regulations and the Staff Rules, except as provided under the rule.

Section 7
Place of home leave within the country of home leave

Determination of the place of home leave within the country of home leave

7.1 The place of home leave within the staff member's home country shall be, for the purpose of travel and transportation entitlements, the place with which the staff member had the closest residential ties during the period of his or her most recent residence in the home country. The place of home leave within the country of home leave is determined at the time of appointment on the basis of the information provided by the staff member in his or her personal history profile.

7.2 If a staff member finds that an error was made in the initial determination of his or her place of home leave within the home country, he or she may request that it be corrected on the basis that his or her closest ties prior to his or her appointment were with another place within the home country. Such request shall be submitted to the Office of Human Resources Management at Headquarters or the local human resources office in offices away from Headquarters, prior to the exercise of the first home leave. For the staff member's request to be approved, he or she shall provide evidence to the satisfaction of the Secretary-General that his or her closest ties in the home country prior to his or her appointment were with a place other than the one originally designated.

7.3 The place of home leave determines the staff member's travel and transportation entitlements. The staff member may, in the exercise of his or her home leave entitlement, travel to any place within the home leave country. In such case, the travel and transportation expenses borne by the Organization shall not exceed the cost of travel to the recognized place of home leave within the home country. If the cost of the staff member's travel is more economical than that to the place of home leave, the amount payable by the United Nations shall be limited to the actual travel expenses incurred, provided these do not exceed the approved standard of accommodation.

Change of the place of home leave within the country of home leave

7.4 A change in the place of home leave within the country of home leave may be authorized in exceptional circumstances under the following conditions:

(a) The staff member must have a minimum of five years of continuous service; and

(b) The staff member must provide evidence that he or she has established substantially greater ties with another place within the home country compared with the originally designated place of home leave.

7.5 A change of place of home leave within the home country may be granted only once during a staff member's service with the Organization.

Section 8
Travel to a country other than the recognized country of home leave

8.1 Travel to a country other than the country of home leave may be authorized for any home leave year, provided that the staff member demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary-General that he or she has close family or personal ties in that country. The amount of travel and transportation expenses borne by the

Organization shall not exceed the cost of travel to the place of home leave. If the cost of the staff member's travel to the other country is more economical than that to the recognized place of home leave, the amount payable by the Organization shall be limited to the actual travel expenses incurred, provided these do not exceed the approved standard of accommodation for home leave travel.

8.2 Travel to a country other than the country of home leave may also be authorized where, because of war, civil strife or political unrest or for other security reasons, the staff member or his or her eligible family members are unable to travel to the country of home leave. In such cases, the staff member may be authorized to travel to a neighbouring country with social and cultural affinities to the home country or to another country as provided under section 8.1.

8.3 Authorization to travel to a country other than the country of home leave under sections 8.1 and 8.2 above is given on a one-time basis, and the staff member shall be required to make a request each time he or she wishes to travel to a country other than the country of home leave.

8.4 Staff members assigned to duty stations with a 12-month home leave cycle may exercise every other home leave travel to a country other than the country of home leave, provided that a period not less than seven calendar days, exclusive of travel time, is spent in the country of travel. The amount of travel expenses payable by the United Nations in such cases shall not exceed the cost of travel to the place of home leave. If the cost of the staff member's travel is more economical than that to the place of home leave, the amount payable by the United Nations shall be limited to the actual travel expenses incurred, provided these do not exceed the approved standard of accommodation. Every second home leave entitlement must be exercised to the country of home leave, or to another country where the staff member has close family or personal ties, as provided for in section 8.1 above.

Section 9
Travel arrangements

9.1 Travel on home leave shall be arranged in accordance with administrative instruction ST/AI/2013/3, entitled "Official travel". A staff member shall claim expenses for authorized home leave travel for himself or herself and his or her eligible family members in accordance with sections 6 and 13 of that administrative instruction.

9.2 When home leave travel is combined with travel on official business or change of official duty station, the standard of travel accommodation for the official business and combined home leave travel shall be economy class.

9.3 Staff members who wish to exercise their entitlement to home leave travel shall be required to inform their executive offices or local human resources or administrative offices of their travel plans normally two months in advance of the anticipated departure date.

9.4 The procedures for the exercise of the lump-sum option for travel by air on home leave are provided in administrative instruction ST/AI/2013/3 and information circular ST/IC/2001/43, or as amended. However, it should be noted that when a staff member's home leave travel is combined with travel on official business, the staff member may exercise the lump-sum option only in respect of his or her eligible family members.

Section 10
Home leave travel request

While the staff member's supervisor approves the annual leave request for the absence of the staff member from work, the eligibility review and the authority to approve home leave travel resides with the executive offices for staff members serving at Headquarters and with the local human resources or administrative offices for staff members serving at other locations outside Headquarters. Staff members should therefore address their home leave travel requests to their respective Executive Office or local human resources or administrative office, irrespective of the option chosen to exercise their entitlement.

Section 11
Transitional measures for establishing the points system in duty stations with a 24-month home leave cycle

11.1 The former system of "odd" and "even" years for duty stations with a 24-month home leave cycle is hereby replaced by a home leave service credit points system which shall be applicable to staff members at all duty stations in accordance with section 3 above. As a result, the concept of "deferred home leave" is replaced by the 48-point maximum accrual of home leave service credit points as set out in section 3.12 above.

11.2 The determination of a staff member's initial points balance shall be based on a simulation of the points accrued since the last home leave exercised by the staff member, provided that such home leave was neither delayed nor advanced. Should the last home leave exercised by the staff member have been delayed or advanced, the simulation of points shall be based on the last home leave exercised as regular home leave, adjusting the points for the delayed or advanced home leave(s) subsequently taken.

Section 12
Final provisions

12.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

12.2 Administrative instruction ST/AI/367 and Amend.1, entitled "Home leave — change of place of home leave and change of country of home leave", and sections 5, 6 and 8 of administrative instruction ST/AI/2000/6, entitled "Special entitlements at designated duty stations", are hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Yukio **Takasu**
Under-Secretary-General for Management